



Best Holiday Wishes

Winter is a wonderful time of year at Rocky Mountain National Park. Beauty is everywhere, from snow-laden peaks under bright blue skies - to icy streams burbling under snowy banks - to the hearty wildlife that meander the park. We hope you can experience the beauty of winter firsthand in the park this season.

Although it is a quieter time in the park, our staff are very busy with a variety of responsibilities. Winter is a time to repair buildings and machinery, hire summer staff, set up budgets and funding for the coming year, plan summer programs, and at the same time, provide the same daily services to visitors in visitor centers and out in the park.

We at Rocky Mountain National Park wish you a holiday season wreathed in good cheer.

See you out in the park.

Vaughn Baker
Superintendent





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Stewardship Award

Rocky Mountain National Park annually presents a Stewardship Award to a person or entity that has particularly supported resource protection in the park.

Superintendent Vaughn Baker was pleased to present the 2006 Stewardship Award to both the Town of Estes Park and the Town of Grand Lake.

As gateway communities to Rocky Mountain National Park, the Towns of Estes Park and Grand Lake were recognized for their commitment and dedication to the protection of park resources and values while providing for visitor enjoyment. These mutual interests, including resource and environmental protection and economic development, add to the quality of life of community residents. Cooperative conservation activities are vital



Vaughn Baker presents the RMNP 2006 Stewardship Awards to Grand Lake Mayor Judy Burke (top) and Estes Park Mayor John Baudek

elements in establishing relationships that will benefit the park and foster decisions that are sustainable.

The Towns are good neighbors to the park. Through partnering, the park has worked collaboratively with the Towns on many projects. Partnerships with the Towns have produced countless benefits for the park.

The benefits of this collaborative partnership extend into the future, as the Towns are committed to long-term stewardship of the park. The park especially recognizes both Towns' commitment to furthering wilderness designation for the park.

It is evident that the Towns of Estes Park and Grand Lake share the National Park Service's commitment to protect park resources and values, and provide for their enjoyment in a spirit of partnership. With America's changing demographics and landscape, the need to build awareness of parks and conservation values, a strong sense of stewardship, and strong public support are increasingly important. The Towns of Estes Park and Grand Lake are commended for their commitment to advancing long-term protection of Rocky Mountain National Park.

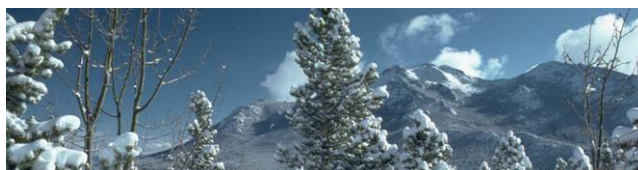
The National Park Service is proud to partner with the Towns of Estes Park and Grand Lake in the stewardship of Rocky Mountain National Park to the benefit of this and future generations.

"Everything is absolutely wonderful..."

"Everything is absolutely wonderful..." the Visitor Comment form stated. Happily, that is how 98 percent of the visitors to Rocky Mountain National Park felt when surveyed last summer.

To assist the National Park Service in complying with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), a visitor survey was conducted in units of the National Park System in fiscal year 2006. The survey was developed to measure each park unit's performance related to the GPRA goals of visitor satisfaction, understanding and appreciation.

The percentage of visitors satisfied overall with appropriate facilities, services and recreational opportunities was 98 percent. Park staff are proud and pleased that visitors, by and large, enjoy their experience in this great national park.



International Park Managers Visit Rocky Mountain National Park

Yellowstone National Park was set aside in 1872 as America's – and the world's - first national park. Author Wallace Stegner wrote in 1998, "National parks are the best idea we ever had. Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst." The American invention of national parks began a worldwide movement that has subsequently spread to more than 100 countries and 1,200 national parks and conservation preserves. The U. S. National Park Service's Office of International Affairs has noted that many countries around the world look to the United States as a leader in park and protected area management. At the same time, the National Park Service learns about innovative practices from other countries' park agencies.



Tatra National Park (Slovakia) Director Tomas Vancura and RMNP Superintendent Vaughn Baker met in October

Over the past several months, Rocky Mountain National Park has been pleased to host several delegations of international park managers. Park managers from Sweden, Spain, and most recently, from Tatra National Park in Slovakia, have visited this park to interact with managers, learn about issues, and see the park firsthand.

The Swedish park managers were interested in learning about the architecture of visitor facilities, and particularly appreciated seeing some of Rocky's visitor centers and the new warming hut and picnic pavilion at Hidden Valley. The Slovakian park managers were most interested in management of mountain pine beetle, air and water quality, elk and vegetation management, fee management, shuttle bus system, concessions, frontcountry and backcountry management, the volunteer program, cooperating associations, fundraising and environmental education. When park managers from Spain were asked why they wanted to visit Rocky, they responded that they thought the landscapes were similar to theirs in their region. The same is true for Tatra National Park. Their parks are strikingly beautiful and many issues are remarkably common.

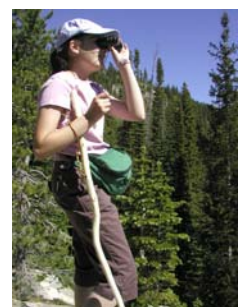
One of the outcomes of the Slovakian delegation's visit is the potential establishment of a sister park relationship between Tatra National Park, Slovakia; Tatra National Park, Republic of Poland (they are already sister parks across the Slovakia-Poland border from each other); and Rocky Mountain National Park.

Town of Grand Lake Partners with RMNP to Host Speaker

In October, Frank Hugelmeyer, President & CEO of the Outdoor Industry Association(OIA), presented an interactive in-depth overview of the active outdoor recreation industry that provided insights on the health, trends and direction of the industry. The session reviewed recent research by the association on the State of the Industry, Youth and Ethnic Participation Trends, National Park Service Attitudes, and the overall Recreation Economy in America.

OIA, based in Boulder, Colorado, is a national trade association whose mission is to ensure the growth and success of the outdoor industry. A wide spectrum of leading manufacturers, distributors, suppliers, and retailers of outdoor recreation equipment and services, as well as other related business entities, make up OIA's membership. OIA programs include representation in government/legislative affairs, cutting edge market research, member cost saving benefits, and outreach initiatives to grow participation in outdoor activities and promote healthier lifestyles.

Frank joined OIA in early 2000 and is a nineteen-year outdoor industry veteran with extensive experience in global retail and manufacturing. He is a founder and director of the Outdoor Industry Foundation, a non-profit organization advancing the adoption of the active outdoor recreation lifestyle among America's youth. OIA is widely recognized as the premiere source for outdoor industry and active lifestyle research, and Frank is a recognized authority on the outdoor industry supply chain, retail sales, active outdoor consumer and related public lands issues.



Over three quarters of Americans participate in active outdoor recreation each year

The Active Outdoor Recreation Economy Report can be found at www.outdoorindustry.org

According to the report the recreation economy:

- Contributes \$730 billion to the U.S. economy
- Supports nearly 6.5 million jobs across the U.S.
- Generates \$88 billion in annual state and national tax revenue
- Provides sustainable growth in rural communities
- Generates \$289 billion annually in retail sales and services across the U.S.
- Touches over 8 percent of America's personal consumption expenditures – more than 1 in every 12 dollars circulating in the economy

The report states, "Many people don't realize that having fun and staying healthy in the outdoors is essential to the continued growth of our economy."

This presentation and partnership is another example of how the gateway communities of Grand Lake and Estes Park, in conjunction with Rocky Mountain National Park staff, continue to discuss and promote recreation and tourism.

A River's Dual Character

Here is your trivia for today: What is the only designated National Wild and Scenic River in Colorado? Answer: the Cache la Poudre River, whose headwaters are located in Rocky Mountain National Park.

According to the National Wild and Scenic River System website, to lend balance to the United States' history of physically altering its waterways, Congress created the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in October 1968, to "...preserve... selected rivers or sections thereof in their free-flowing condition to protect the water quality of such rivers and to fulfill other vital national conservation purposes." Designation as a wild and scenic river does not halt a river's use, but is intended to preserve its character. Uses compatible with the management goals of a river are allowed, and change is expected to happen; however, development must ensure the river's free flow and protect its "outstandingly remarkable resources." The term "living landscape" has been frequently applied to wild and scenic rivers.



Poudre Lake, headwaters of the Cache la Poudre River, in RMNP

Oregon has the most rivers designated, with 47. Alaska has the most miles designated, with 3,210 - including the Yukon. Colorado currently has but one Wild and Scenic River, and it is right here!

Designated a Wild and Scenic River on October 30, 1986, the Cache la Poudre River starts at Poudre Lake, which is adjacent to the Continental Divide at Milner Pass along Trail Ridge Road. Of its total length of 125 miles, the upper 31 miles are designated wild and scenic. The river flows north out of the park into the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forest, eventually flowing east down the rugged Poudre Canyon along Highway 14. From where it pours out of the Rockies and onto the prairie, the Cache la Poudre River takes a meandering 45-mile course eastward to join the South Platte River. Here the Cache la Poudre flows gently past the edges of farms and cities, such as Fort Collins, Windsor and Greeley, and in the summer it is barely possible to float a canoe on its modest current. However, the significance of this small river is greater than its size would suggest. Its historic importance is not obvious to the untrained eye, but its intricate network of canals, ditches and reservoirs reveals a long struggle to sustain a viable agricultural economy, urban development and recreational opportunities for the people of northern Colorado.

The Poudre's contribution to western water management extends beyond its immediate vicinity. This river has served arid regions throughout the West, not only by providing water to the people of north central Colorado, but by serving as a laboratory for water management for well over 150 years.

The Poudre's dual character is formally recognized. Not only are its upper mountainous 31 miles designated a National Wild and Scenic River, ten years later, the lower 45 miles, from the National Forest boundary to its confluence with the South Platte River, became the first National Heritage Area west of the Mississippi. The National Park Service describes a heritage area as "a region in which



The Cache la Poudre River west of Greeley

residents, businesses and governments join together to preserve, promote and celebrate their heritage, culture, and natural resources for the benefit of current and future generations." The Cache la Poudre River

Corridor was established to commemorate the river's role in the development of western water management.

The Cache la Poudre River is the only river in the United States to claim both designations – Wild and Scenic River and National Heritage Area.

The river's name means "hide the powder," and is one of the few place names of French origin in Colorado. In 1836, French fur trappers were caught in an early fall snowstorm near the present town of Bellvue, northwest of Fort Collins. They buried supplies, including large amounts of gunpowder (*poudre*) in a hiding place (*cache*) along the banks of the river which now bears the name.

This river corridor was occupied by Native Americans for over 12,000 years. In the late 1800s, gold miners and tie hacks, who cut trees for railroad ties, brought the first permanent settlements to the Poudre Canyon. Gold camps turned into ghost towns. A railroad was never completed through the canyon, but State Highway 14, the Cache la Poudre-North Park Colorado Scenic Byway, is open year-round and follows the Poudre Canyon up to Walden (North Park). The Forest Service manages the area to provide opportunities for high-quality recreation and to protect the river environment. Their goal is to maintain a balance of uses along the corridor, while minimizing conflicts in this increasingly popular canyon. Recreation along Poudre Canyon includes scenic driving, camping, picnicking, hiking, whitewater rafting, fishing, hunting, and winter sports.

A Tribute to Randy Jones

Randy Jones served as Superintendent of Rocky Mountain National Park from 1995 – 2002, when he left to be the Deputy Director of the National Park Service. Sadly, Randy passed away from cancer in November 2005.

Randy accomplished many significant things while here at the park. A tribute to him including a list and photos of many of his accomplishments



Julie Jones, Randy's wife, looks at the tribute at McGraw Ranch

was hung at McGraw Ranch. Randy is recognized for his leadership in managing, providing visitor services, improving facilities and protecting park resources while serving as Superintendent of Rocky Mountain National Park

The great use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it. - William James

Randy's efforts for the protection of Rocky Mountain National Park and the improvement of visitor facilities for their safety and enjoyment will benefit this and future generations.



6th Annual Lumpy Ridge Trails Day: Adopt-A-Crag Project

For the 6th consecutive year, Front Range climbers, American Alpine Club, and Access Fund members, as well as outdoor stewards rendezvoused in Rocky Mountain National Park to upgrade climber access trails at Lumpy Ridge. This splitter granite rock climbing area continues to attract climbers from all over the world to test their crack climbing skills. Summer thunderstorms are persistently eroding away the access trails to the crags.

The focus this year was on approach trails to both the 'Pear' and 'Book' rock formations. Fifty volunteers, including nine Rocky Mountain National Park employees, got their engines started at 7:30 am with 'joe' and pastries provided by the local Starbucks. After teaming up and carpooling, the convoy of NPS trucks led them through the historic MacGregor Ranch, and team and tool safety was outlined at a point very close to the base of these rock



NPS trail crew plus 39 volunteers lunch in Black Canyon meadows. The Access Fund launched this national day of trail maintenance in 1999 for rock climbers to 'give back' to the environment in which they spend their time.

cliffs. Many longtime climbers had never had the pleasure of soaking in the view of Lumpy from this angle.

The day produced installation of 140 treated wood water-bars to check and channel runoff. This is a laborious task that requires excavating the rocky soil and burying approximately half the log plus either nailing it down with 12" rebar or planting a large rock on either end, which is also buried halfway. 2100 linear feet of trail were rehabilitated and over 30 stone steps were also constructed to both protect from erosion as well as prevent trail braiding. Some of these rocks outweighed the crew members. Five storm water drains were carved in and three downed trees were removed. The RMNP trail staff is methodical and meticulous about their trail building so as to create sustainable structures that will stand the test of time. Most of the access trails are quite steep and wind through rugged ponderosa forest that has very little soil to grow a protective ground cover. The severity of high mountain thunderstorms are compounded by the volumes of water that wash down off the 300' high crags. Hopefully the new trails will last for decades.

The American Alpine Club, Central Rockies Section, provided hoagie sandwiches, sports drinks and snacks for lunch, and all members lounged for 45 minutes in the warm autumn sun. Work proceeded until about 4:00 pm, when all volunteers were treated to goodie bags that contained custom T-shirts, REI gift certificates, and snacks. The day finished with a gear raffle. Gifts were provided by local Estes Park businesses like the Mountain Shop, Trail Ridge Outfitters as well as Mountain Smith fanny packs and embroidered jackets from the American Alpine Club.

- by Greg Sievers, Chairman, Central Rockies Section,
American Alpine Club

Note: Rocky Mountain National Park is grateful to the American Alpine Club and other organizations that partner with the park on projects to benefit visitors and protect park resources.

Free On-Line Course Teaches All About the National Park Service

WASHINGTON, DC — Ever wonder what the National Park Service teaches its new rangers or how America's national parks came to be? A new on-line course is available to the public to answer those and many more questions about the National Park Service.

Introduction to the National Park Service: Its History and Mission, will provide anyone who takes the course a great introduction to the Park Service. NPS Fundamentals, a successful orientation for Park Service employees, has been adapted for students, teachers, people in parks and recreation, community organizations, and the general public.

The course offers a comprehensive understanding of the background and development of the National Park Service. It's perfect for those who need the maximum amount of accurate information in the minimum amount of time because the course provides users with convenient access to an abundance of useful information that can be absorbed quickly.

When you log on for the course you'll be offered a variety of interactive tools, videos, links and practice activities to complement the informational content. People will have fun learning about the National Park Service; the content is quick and easy to use with most users completing each of the three course modules in 30 to 40 minutes.

The course was developed by staff of the NPS Horace M. Albright Training Center and the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands, based at Indiana University, an NPS partner since 1977.

This free e-course is one of several courses available at the [ParkTraining.Org](http://www.ParkTraining.Org) website. [ParkTraining.Org](http://www.ParkTraining.Org) is designed to give park and recreation professionals the opportunity to pursue continuing education through the convenience and flexibility of the Internet. To find out more about the *Introduction to the National Park Service: its History and Mission* and other e-courses, call the Eppley Institute for parks and Public Lands at 812-855-3095 or visit <http://www.ParkTraining.org>



Featured in this issue: The **White-tailed Ptarmigan** is a dweller of the mountaintops, living in all alpine areas of Colorado. Pure white in winter and mottled brown with a white belly in summer, it retains its white tail year-round. Ptarmigan molt to blend in with the environment; spring molts are from the top down, and fall molts are from the bottom up. Feathered feet act as snowshoes and insulation, and eyelids are feathered in winter for extra protection from frigid alpine winds. Approximately 12½ inches in size, the ptarmigan is so well camouflaged that it is very hard to spot on the tundra any time of the year.

This is a publication of Rocky Mountain National Park. Designer/Editor: Katy Sykes, Assistant to the Superintendent